

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 173

June 26, 1996, 6:20 p.m.
Page S-6967 Temp. Record

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION/\$4 FY 1997 Cut

SUBJECT: National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1997 . . . S. 1745. Exon amendment No. 4345.

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 45-55

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1745, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1997, will authorize a total of \$267.3 billion in budget authority for national defense programs (the President requested \$254.3 billion). In real terms, this bill will authorize \$5.6 billion less, and the President requested \$18.6 billion less, than was provided in fiscal year (FY) 1996.

The Exon amendment would add the following, "Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the total amount authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 1997 under the provisions to this Act is \$262,362,000." (The amendment would cut the total authorized level by \$4 billion. Specific authorizations in the bill would still total \$267 billion).

Those favoring the amendment contended:

Fiscal year 1996 defense spending was \$263.2 billion. Under the Exon amendment, it would be \$263.4 billion. Without rounding, the Exon amendment would increase spending on defense in nominal terms by \$155 million. This modest increase would be in line with the treatment that is being given to domestic discretionary spending accounts. In the budget resolution that just passed, domestic discretionary spending for most programs was held at FY 1996 levels. This level of funding would still be \$9 billion more than the Pentagon and the President requested. Some Senators say that a \$9 billion increase is not enough--they want a \$13 billion increase. We think they are being unreasonable, especially considering that last year they increased the President's funding request by \$7 billion. This bill contains \$4.6 billion in authorizations for projects that are of such low-priority that the Pentagon has not only not requested them for this year, it has not requested them in its 5-year defense plan either. They are basically porkbarrel spending projects that are located in the States of prominent Members of Congress. The appropriate thing to do is to accept the Exon amendment and to eliminate this porkbarrel spending. National security interests would not be harmed, the President would be much less likely to veto the bill, and the deficit would be reduced by an extra \$4 billion. We see only folly in our colleagues being

(See other side)

YEAS (45)			NAYS (55)			NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (6 or 11%)	Democrats (39 or 83%)		Republicans (47 or 89%)	Democrats (8 or 17%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Brown	Akaka	Hollings	Abraham	Hutchison	Breaux	EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE: 1—Official Buisiness 2—Necessarily Absent 3—Illness 4—Other SYMBOLS: AY—Announced Yea AN—Announced Nay PY—Paired Yea PN—Paired Nay	
Grassley	Baucus	Kennedy	Ashcroft	Inhofe	Feinstein		
Gregg	Biden	Kerrey	Bennett	Kempthorne	Heflin		
Hatfield	Bingaman	Kerry	Bond	Kyl	Inouye		
Jeffords	Boxer	Kohl	Burns	Lott	Johnston		
Kassebaum	Bradley	Lautenberg	Campbell	Lugar	Lieberman		
	Bryan	Leahy	Chafee	Mack	Nunn		
	Bumpers	Levin	Coats	McCain	Robb		
	Byrd	Mikulski	Cochran	McConnell			
	Conrad	Moseley-Braun	Cohen	Murkowski			
	Daschle	Moynihan	Coverdell	Nickles			
	Dodd	Murray	Craig	Pressler			
	Dorgan	Pell	D'Amato	Roth			
	Exon	Pryor	DeWine	Santorum			
	Feingold	Reid	Domenici	Shelby			
	Ford	Rockefeller	Faircloth	Simpson			
	Glenn	Sarbanes	Frahm	Smith			
	Graham	Simon	Frist	Snowe			
	Harkin	Wellstone	Gorton	Specter			
		Wyden	Gramm	Stevens			
			Grams	Thomas			
			Hatch	Thompson			
			Helms	Thurmond			
				Warner			

Compiled and written by the staff of the Republican Policy Committee—Larry E. Craig, Chairman

intransigent; we urge them to compromise by supporting the Exon amendment.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

This amendment is not about compromising between reasonable differences of opinion. The defense budget proposed by President Clinton is grossly underfunded, both for this year and for future year defense plans. Between 1990 and 2002, domestic discretionary outlays will go up 12.5 percent, and mandatory spending will climb 34.2 percent. Only defense spending will drop, and it will drop by 34 percent. Most of that drop will come out of procurement accounts, which have already been cut by more than 70 percent since 1985. This bill will not undo the damage, nor even stop it. It will only slow the rate of decline in defense spending. Our colleagues are offended that we would stop their raids on the defense budget. They want to weaken national security by another \$4 billion worth.

We talked with Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Boorda about the Navy's procurement needs shortly before his death. He told us that the President's procurement request for the Navy alone was underfunded by at least \$7.9 billion. We told him that increasing spending by that much was totally unrealistic given funding restraints, and he replied that anything less would make us derelict in our duty to meet future defense needs. As equipment becomes worn out and obsolete, it needs to be replaced with modern equipment. If we do not make steady replacements, a bow-wave effect is produced, creating a need for an enormous tidal wave of procurement spending in the out-years. The bow wave for the Navy will hit between 2000 and 2010. Admiral Boorda was not alone--every branch of the military has told us that the President did not request enough funding in the current or future years defense plan.

In prior years, military commanders have always been willing to salute any budget put forth by the President. They have said that he is the Commander in Chief, so they will find a way of making his budget work. This year marks the first time in our experience that they have said that the President's budget cannot be made to work. It is a fraud. At the level of funding requested, the United States will not have a military capable of meeting its national security needs as they are currently defined. If we are going to follow this path, we should do so honestly. We should admit it if we are not going to provide enough funding to fight two regional conflicts at once, or even one regional conflict. We should admit it if we are not going to provide enough funding to project military power around the globe. We may have to limit our activities to Western Europe, or we may even have to retreat into a lightly armed fortress America. If we delude ourselves about our capabilities, the results could be disastrous.

The basic, extremely offensive premise of our colleagues' amendment is anything that we add to the budget that the Administration did not request must be wasteful, porkbarrel spending. Our colleagues are so certain that we could not possibly have the national interest at heart, even though we have been told by every military commander we have questioned that current procurement levels are gutting future defense capabilities. Are our colleagues ready to say that our proposal to purchase more C-17s in order to achieve economies of scale that will save hundreds of millions of dollars is a porkbarrel proposal? Are they ready to say that our proposal to purchase the V-22 to replace the Marines' aging helicopter fleet is porkbarrel spending? Implicitly, they are making those arguments, because they are saying that Congress should simply serve as a rubberstamp to the Administration's defense request. Serving as a rubberstamp would be a total abdication of our duties as Members. Members have a constitutional duty to determine defense spending levels just as they have a duty to determine all other spending levels. We were not elected to defer to the Administration.

For fiscal year 1994, President Clinton cut procurement spending and promised that next year he would increase it. (President Clinton did not change the fiscal year 1993 budget he inherited from President Bush, though he did try to increase deficit spending with his stimulus bill). For fiscal years 1995 and 1996, he again cut procurement spending, and each year he promised that the following year would see increases in procurement spending. Now, for fiscal year 1997, after promising in his State of the Union address that he was finally finished with his defense cuts, he has yet again proposed procurement cuts and increases in the future.

We are not interested in promises. We need to increase defense procurement spending. The \$13 billion increase in this bill is already a compromise. The President wanted to spend only \$38 billion; his own Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said that \$60 billion is necessary. We have thus already short-changed national security by \$9 billion. An additional \$4 billion cut is unwarranted. Therefore, the Exon amendment should be rejected.